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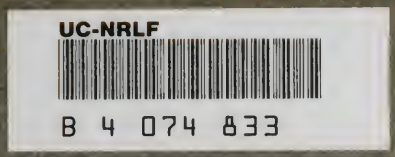

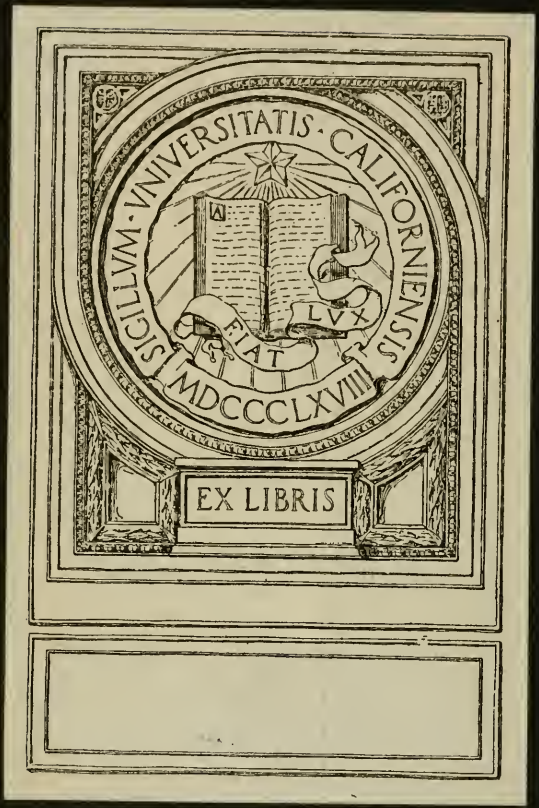
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By

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BASIS OF PUBLICATION

This series of Papers is issued under the auspices of a Committee drawn from various Christian bodies and political parties, and is based on the following convictions :

1. That Great Britain was in August morally bound to declare war and is no less bound to carry the war to a decisive issue ;
2. That the war is none the less an outcome and a revelation of the un-Christian principles which have dominated the life of Western Christendom and of which both the Church and the nations have need to repent ;
3. That followers of Christ, as members of the Church, are linked to one another in a fellowship which transcends all divisions of nationality or race ;
4. That the Christian duties of love and forgiveness are as binding in time of war as in time of peace ;
5. That Christians are bound to recognize the insufficiency of mere compulsion for overcoming evil, and to place supreme reliance upon spiritual forces and in particular upon the power and method of the Cross ;
6. That only in proportion as Christian principles dictate the terms of settlement will a real and lasting peace be secured ;
7. That it is the duty of the Church to make an altogether new effort to realize and apply to all the relations of life its own positive ideal of brotherhood and fellowship ;
8. That with God all things are possible.

WHAT IS AT STAKE IN THE WAR

Since August 1914 much has been written about 'the war which is to end war', and even those who are too strongly imbued with the reality of things to believe in so sudden and radical a change in human nature, earnestly hope that when once the hurricane which is still devastating Europe has spent itself, it will at least be followed by a long period of calm and recuperation. The Napoleonic Wars ushered in a generation of peace, and it is safe to assert that the present war before it is over, will have crowded as much carnage, destruction, and human misery into a relatively brief period, as the twenty years of upheaval to which the French Revolution gave birth. The millions who return from the field will have no desire to renew their experience of modern armaments or to extend the study of cultured savagery. They are likely to hold to strict account those responsible for their sufferings, to insist that the struggle shall not have been in vain, and that the settlement shall give some concrete expression to their ideals.

Never in history will the statesmen, in whose hands the control of Foreign Policy lies, have been faced by so great a responsibility as in those months of negotiation which must inevitably separate the conclusion of hostilities and the final establishment of peace. It is already obvious that no single Power will obtain the maximum of its desires and that disappointment is in store for all extremists. But this need not cause excessive regret; indeed it may even be regarded as indispensable to the attainment of that *juste milieu* which will assure safety and satisfaction to the victors without kindling in the vanquished that intolerable sense of wrong which goads men to fresh violence.

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The new Europe must be built on deep and broad foundations—but on lines of atonement, not of vengeance. We must make it possible for our enemies to emerge from the mood of exaltation and arrogance into which their rulers have plunged them, and to join in the necessary work of reconstruction. But this involves as an essential preliminary the overthrow of those hidebound diplomatic traditions which have so long been the bane of international relations and which are above all responsible for the present war. The Congress of Vienna (1815) remapped Europe in accordance with the interests of her dynasties ; the Congress of Berlin (1878) settled the Near East on a basis of governmental interests, as conceived by the Great Powers. The coming Congress of 1916 or 1917 must give preference to the interests of the nations themselves. No fair-minded student of modern history can resist the conclusion that it was the neglect of national aspirations and of the economic problems which are so inextricably bound up with them, that has been directly responsible for most of the great wars and revolutionary outbreaks of the past century, and above all for the failures which attended more than one diplomatic settlement.

Hence all who have the peace of Europe at heart, are bound to insist in season and out of season, that the chancelleries of the Entente shall not be allowed, whether by the corroding influence of the censorship or by the momentary exigencies of the military situation, to betray that principle of Nationality to which they stand irrevocably committed. It was a true instinct which nailed the colours of nationality to the mast ; but rust and rough usage are already loosening the hold of the nails. Those who control our foreign policy are thoroughly honest and well-meaning : but unless they receive firm backing from a keen and well-informed public opinion, they run grave risk of succumbing to the forces of reaction which are so steadily being brought to bear upon them from the most unexpected quarters both at home and

abroad. Unless such a body of opinion can be created—and it cannot as yet be said to exist—it is utterly futile to indulge in vague invective against 'secret diplomacy'. All sensible democrats are in favour of democratic control of Foreign Policy, but the foremost obstacle to that control has been not so much the existence of an aristocratic caste or its alleged aversion to intruders from another class, as the boundless and dispiriting indifference of the masses in this country to the problems which inevitably give to that policy its direction. As an able critic has recently remarked, 'there can be no *revolutionary* change in foreign politics until the Peoples have learnt more'. People who neither know nor care about the difference between Sofia and Bucarest, between Poles and Czechs, between Trieste and Valona, between Tangier and Tripoli, are obviously incapable of forming any just views upon the future of the Balkans, upon Russo-German rivalry, or upon British naval policy in the Mediterranean. The war has revealed the abyss of ignorance beside which the nation had so contentedly reposed for years, and we are now faced by a unique opportunity for making good the omissions of the past. But in spite of many gallant efforts we are still some way from that concentration of expert opinion and practical experience which is the only sound basis for a constructive, as opposed to a merely negative, policy.

What, then, is our policy to-day? Its main principles were brilliantly summed up by the Prime Minister in his memorable speech of September 19. They were, he said, 'firstly, to vindicate the sanctity of treaty obligations and what is properly called the public law of Europe; secondly, to assert and to enforce the independence of free states, relatively small and weak, against the encroachments and violence of the strong; and thirdly, to withstand, as we believe in the best interests not only of our own Empire, but of civilization at large, the arrogant claim of a single Power to dominate the development of the destinies of Europe'. Yet clear and admirable as

this summary is, it is meaningless unless we attempt to translate its phrases into the hard facts of the political world.

One fact has already become abundantly clear since those words were uttered—that whereas the victory of the Central Powers means an absolute German hegemony over enemies and allies alike, the victory of the Entente will be the joint work of an ever-expanding group of Powers. While Germany, if she wins, will justly regard herself as having saved Austria-Hungary from destruction, not one of her rivals, in the event of the triumph of the Entente, will be able to claim a monopoly of the credit. Each will have contributed to the common cause, but in each case that contribution will have been an indispensable part of the total effort. Here at least it is possible to find some consolation. The victory of William II would be a victory for the spirit which inspired Louis XIV or the first Napoleon, a reversion to the vanishing era of insolent conquest and plunder. The victory of the Allies will be a victory for Europe and the European system. What might have been a mere war for French or British or Russian Imperialism, has thus become a conflict in which all good 'Europeans', to say nothing of Americans, are ranged against a single renegade foe.

The creed of the Allies is a creed of diversity, that of the Germans is a creed of uniformity. The openly avowed aim of their political and academic thinkers is the imposition of a single form of 'culture'—the German—upon a world which has blindly failed to appreciate its merits. Hence their victory would mean the subjection of Europe to a new doctrine of Infallibility as demoralizing for its inventor as it would be intolerable for its victims. The victory of the Allies, on the other hand, will be the joint work of widely different ideals and traditions, and will vindicate the right of every people to preserve and develop its own national individuality. As a writer in the *Nation* has well said, the allied nations oppose to Germany's senseless worship of the 'Will-to-Power' an

invincible faith in the 'Right-to-Live' of small and great nations alike.

Let us turn from theory to practice, and consider briefly what the victory of the Allies involves in the language of hard political facts. We are fighting three enemies of widely differing character, quality, and strength —Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Turkey. In any consideration of our policy towards them, it is advisable to treat them in the inverse order to their importance, for reasons which will soon become obvious. In peace-time all save the extremists favoured palliatives. To-day only the most drastic measures will meet the case. Hence the victory of the Allies means the dismemberment of Turkey and Austria-Hungary—first because only thus can we hope to isolate and bring Germany to her knees, and secondly because only on their ruins can we erect the new Europe of our dreams. Of these two organisms, the one is rotten to the core, the other has unhappily shown itself incapable of internal regeneration, and both have made themselves the voluntary tools of a stronger and more unscrupulous Power.

In Turkey to-day the issue is clear. The art of government has always been a sealed book to the Turk, and for generations past there has been a blight upon everything that he has touched. 'The grass does not grow under the Turkish hoof,' says the Christian proverb, and never has proverb been more signally justified. The final and unanswerable condemnation of Turkish rule consists not in recounting the periodic massacres and outbreaks which its discontented subjects have provoked, but in contrasting the material and moral condition of the various provinces before and after conquest, and still more their condition a generation before and a generation after the expulsion of the Turks. Whether it be Hungary, Croatia, Serbia, Greece, Roumania, Bosnia, or Bulgaria, it is always the same monotonous story of corruption, misery and stagnation, followed by a rapid resurrection from what seemed irretrievable physical and moral

ruin. The Turk has never understood any principle save that of physical force: by the sword he built up his empire, and by the sword he is losing it. When the discord of his former vassals, aggravated by the intrigues of the Great Powers, enabled him two years ago to recover the last wreck of his European dominions, he became a mere tool of the state which had always shown a complete and consistent disregard for the fate and interests of the Balkan Christians. To-day Turkey is dragged at the heels of Germany. A tiny group of adventurers, as little Turkish by race as they are Mohammedan by religion or conviction, dictates to the Khalif of Islam, in German interests, a Holy War against the leading Moslem power in the world; and its ringleader, the assassin of his own commander-in-chief, is accepted as an honoured ally by the monarch who plunged Europe into war on the pretext of avenging the murder of an allied prince. Truly the times are out of joint.

'The Turkish Empire', said Mr. Asquith, 'has committed suicide and dug with its own hand its grave,' and all British parties are to-day united in accepting the Gladstonian policy of driving the Turks 'bag and baggage' out of Europe. The delicate problem of Constantinople and the Straits, so long evaded and postponed, must at last be definitely solved; and we are faced by the alternative of bolstering up for a fresh period the unstable and iniquitous rule of the Sultan, or freely offering the city to Russia, thus satisfying the yearning of centuries for St. Sofia and for the open sea. The creation of a small international state, composed of the countries bordering upon the Sea of Marmora, is an attractive idea, so long as it is merely considered theoretically; any attempt to put it into practice would conjure up the very gravest difficulties and dangers. The Cross of St. Andrew is the only possible substitute for the Crescent of Islam, and it can hardly be doubted that Constantinople will profit as fully and as rapidly by the change as did Batum or Baku a few decades ago. To Russia the question is one of sentiment, of strategy,

and of economics, and these three needs once satisfied, the Western Powers in their turn would be entitled to demand that Constantinople, shall remain a free port for the commerce of all nations, and that special guarantees of free access to the Mediterranean shall be offered to Roumania, to whom the question of the Straits is a matter of life and death, and who has all the more claim to be considered in view of her peculiar position as the guardian of the Danubian delta and that great river's trade with Central Europe. Bulgaria already has a direct access to the Aegean, which may perhaps be extended as the result of a friendly agreement with her neighbours; but Roumania will always remain dependent upon the Bosphorus, and no solution of the Eastern Question which ignores her interests and claims can be either just or permanent.

The problem presented by Austria-Hungary is infinitely more complicated. With its twelve principal races and ten chief languages, with its seven religions and twenty-three legislative bodies, it provides at every turn pitfalls for the unwary or superficial student: and the bare idea of its collapse has filled with terror every advocate of the *status quo*. Small wonder that Palacky's famous phrase, 'If there were no Austria, it would be necessary to create one', should have been re-echoed as a parrot cry for the last sixty years. A true instinct made even the most ignorant feel that the continued existence of the Habsburg Monarchy was essential if a European cataclysm was to be avoided. And yet M. Sorel was unquestionably right when he declared that 'on the day when the Eastern Question appears to have been solved, Europe will inevitably be confronted by the Austrian Question'. The troubles which precipitated the great struggle were due to the inter-action of Balkan and Austrian racial problems—the jetsam of the receding Turkish tide. During the long reign of Francis Joseph, Austria-Hungary has made marked progress in many directions—politically as well as materially; but the attitude of her governing

classes has always been a fatal drag upon the wheel. Her statesmen, far from realizing that so conglomerate a state could not rest upon a negative basis, openly proclaimed and acted upon a policy of 'jogging along' (the famous 'Fortwursteln' of Count Taaffe), of half measures alike in internal and in external affairs. The House of Habsburg, with all its faults and shortcomings, has earned the gratitude of Europe as the champion, for three centuries, of Christendom against the Turks. But with the disappearance of all danger from that quarter a fresh policy was needed, in order to weld into a single whole the medley of peoples whom the dynasty had gradually gathered round it. The necessity for a strong lead in this direction became more and more urgent with every decade, as national feeling gathered force; and yet Francis Joseph has consistently refrained from giving such a lead. At last, when the approaching dissolution of the Dual Monarchy was already the theme alike of superficial observers outside and acute thinkers within, there appeared in the person of the late Archduke Francis Ferdinand a man who seemed to possess the energy, knowledge, and gifts of leadership without which so herculean a task as the regeneration and reconstruction of the state would have been foredoomed to failure. His shortcomings were obvious, but his honesty of purpose and his belief in the mission of his house could not be gainsaid. It is the fashion to regard his uncle as the victim of some elemental Oedipean tragedy; but surely the fate of the nephew is infinitely more tragic. At the moment when he awaited with growing impatience the supreme moment of opportunity, confident that he would rally round him in his effort all the best brains of the Monarchy—at that moment he was struck down by the hand of an assassin, and his place was filled by a thoughtless and inexperienced youth better versed in light opera than in even the simplest problems of the political world.

His death removed the one man capable of restoring order to an internal situation which—for lack of any

positive action—was rapidly becoming desperate. It removed, too, the chief restraining influence in the councils of the Monarchy and left the war parties supreme in Central Europe. The reactionaries of Berlin and the reactionaries of Budapest joined hands over the inanimate body of Austria. German and Magyar are inspired by a common resolve to maintain their domination over the Slav, to prevent the rising democracies of Western Slavdom from coming to their own. To-day we see Germany mercilessly draining the resources of Austria-Hungary in a quarrel which is altogether hateful to a majority among the latter's population; we see the exploitation of close upon thirty million people by their traditional enemies. If the menace of German military hegemony is to be removed from Europe, the first and most obvious task of the Allies must be the emancipation of the Slav and Latin races of Austria-Hungary, the vindication of their right to a free national development.

Before the war much was heard of the alleged attempt to 'ring round' Germany by a superior combination of hostile Powers. The events of the last nine months have effectually exploded the theory of the Entente's menace. Germany has not only proved herself a match for her three great rivals, despite the secession of one member of her own group, but has even succeeded in galvanizing her remaining ally into fresh life. But this is the last spasmodic effort of a system which belongs to the age of feudalism rather than to modern times. The great war is a hideous proof that the policy of racial dominance and forcible assimilation is morally bankrupt, but through its long-drawn-out horrors we believe that more than one dream of national unity and liberation will be realized, and that those racial minorities whose separate existence reasons of geography and economics render impossible, will attain guarantees of full linguistic and cultural liberty.

The moment is still far distant when we can attempt to define the new frontiers of Europe; but in view of the complicated issues involved it is already necessary to

weigh very carefully the various alternatives. The dissolution of Austria-Hungary—an event which is only conceivable if Germany should be completely defeated—would involve a complete re-grouping of Central and South-eastern Europe. The chief features of the new situation would be (1) the union of Polish Galicia with the new Poland; (2) of Ruthene Galicia with the Russian Ukraine; (3) of the Trentino, Trieste and Western Istria with the Kingdom of Italy; (4) the creation of an independent Bohemia—including not merely the Czechs, but their Slovak kinsmen in Northern Hungary; (5) of a Greater Roumania, including the Roumanian populations of Hungary and the Bukovina; (6) of a new Southern Slav state, composed of the present Kingdoms of Serbia and Montenegro, the ancient but dormant Triune Kingdom of Croatia-Slavonia-Dalmatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Eastern Istria and perhaps the Slovene districts of Austria, and finally (7) of an independent Hungary, a national state shorn of the races whom she has so long and so grossly misgoverned, and herself set free for a new era of democratic development. In some cases it may prove difficult to reconcile the rival claims of ethnography and strategic necessity, but by accepting nationality as the guiding principle of any settlement, and insisting that no race shall be handed over to an alien rule without being previously consulted, a great step will have been made towards placing Europe upon a new and surer foundation.

But even with the establishment of free and vigorous national states upon the ruins of the old order, there must inevitably remain the difficult problem of racial minorities, whose interests are of secondary but none the less of vital importance. And just as every effort must be made to ensure the survival of the smaller nations, as the surest bulwarks of true culture and tolerance, as the guardians of racial individuality and diversity of type, so also they in their turn must be induced to offer the fullest political and intellectual

liberty to all racial minorities within their boundaries. A guarantee of linguistic rights in schools, churches, local bodies and cultural institutions must be a *sine quâ non* in the settlement of every problem. Thus the Germans of Bohemia and Southern Hungary must enjoy the same privileges as the Magyars in the new Roumania, the Slovenes in Italy, and the tiny group of Italians in the new Jugoslavia. Those who see their monopoly threatened by such an arrangement will describe it as Utopian, but it is certainly attainable on a basis of careful study and good intentions.

If Nationality is to be the dominant factor in the future settlement of Europe, two other vital factors—economics and religion—must on no account be neglected, unless we are to court disaster. The geographical configuration of the Continent and the distribution of the various races renders some international arrangement of a commercial nature an almost essential postulate of future peace. The free navigation of the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus is in a special category of its own, and lies in the interests of every nation in Europe without exception. If Italy should succeed in establishing her claim to Trieste, she must, alike in her own interests and in those of European peace, convert the city into a free port for all commerce. Its inclusion in the Italian tariff system would rapidly reduce a flourishing port to ruin and create an intolerable situation for its entire *hinterland*, besides acting as a direct challenge to Germany to upset the settlement at the earliest possible date ; whereas its proclamation as a free port would give full scope to every legitimate aspiration of German commerce in the eastern Mediterranean. In the same way, if Fiume should become the port of the new Serbo-Croat state, some satisfactory arrangement must be made for the free access of Hungarian and Bohemian commerce to the sea. From such an arrangement each of the three states would derive great benefits, and its triangular nature would be its most effective guarantee. A similar experiment has already

been successfully tried at the harbour of Salonica, where Serbia possesses a special zone of her own, exempt from Greek customs dues. It is to be hoped that Greece will voluntarily cede Kavala in return for valuable territorial expansion elsewhere ; but failing that, a free port and special tariff concessions for the future Struma valley railway ought to be assured to Bulgaria.

Finally, in the north of Europe similar adjustments would be necessary. If, as all but a few reactionaries hope and believe, this war should bring at least a partial atonement for that greatest of political crimes, the partition of Poland, then the river system of the Vistula will resume its old importance as a geographical unit, and the new Poland must inevitably obtain its outlet to the sea. The only possible way of ending the secular feud of Pole and German is to reunite the broken fragments of the Polish race and to restore the port of Danzig to its natural position as a free port. The alternative would be the cession of Danzig and at least a portion of West Prussia to the new Poland, the isolation of East Prussia from the German motherland, and the consequent creation of a new ' Alsace-Lorraine ' in the east of Europe. This would be not to undo, but merely to invert, the crime of the Polish Partition, and to produce a situation such as must inevitably lead to fresh armed conflicts. Here then is obviously a point at which wise and farsighted commercial provisions can do much to modify acute racial antagonisms.

There is indeed much to be said for some special international arrangement, on the lines of the Danube Commission, for regulating the commerce of all the riparian states with each other and with the outer world. In such cases as the Seine, the Po, or the Volga only a single state is concerned, and the problem must be regarded as one of internal policy. But Germany has as great an interest as Holland in the mouth of the Rhine, Belgium is no less interested than Holland in the mouth of the Scheldt ; on the Elbe and the Moldau depends much of

Bohemia's prosperity; the Danube is likely to assume for Hungary an even greater importance in the future than in the past; while the Vistula supplies the key to the Polish problem.

There remains the religious problem, and nothing is more remarkable (in a war which has pitted Protestant against Protestant and Catholic against Catholic and thus appears to many scoffers as the bankruptcy of the Christian ideal) than the silence which our public opinion has hitherto preserved on one of its most vital aspects. In the very forefront of the vast problems raised by this war is the emancipation and regeneration of the democratic and progressive Slav nations of Central Europe. Of these, five out of seven—the Poles, Czechs, Slovaks, Croats, and Slovenes—are overwhelmingly Catholic; the sixth, the Ruthenes, so far as they inhabit Austria-Hungary, belong to the Uniate Church; while only the seventh, the Serbs, are Orthodox, and on them religion sits lightly, as on all Balkan peoples. This bald statement of fact should suffice to show the utter hopelessness of any attempt to solve these Slav problems on an Orthodox basis. The baneful influence of a tiny clique of reactionaries in Petrograd is being exercised in that direction; but the overwhelming mass of the Russian people, while clinging firmly to the Orthodox faith as a living expression of their innermost soul, will fiercely resent and repudiate any attempt to sow discord between Catholic and Orthodox. The Panslav ideal can only be attained by the enforcement of a religious truce; those who would like to identify Panslavism with Orthodoxy are in reality Pan-Muscovites, and must inevitably rely upon a policy of Russification. Such ideas are a reversion to the evil tendencies of the Middle Ages, to the very traditions by which German and Magyar policy is inspired, and will fail to arouse even the faintest echo among the Western and Southern Slavs, who are all deeply imbued with Western thought and culture.

A classic example of the new spirit is provided by the fraternal example of the Croats and Slovenes, whose fervent

Catholicism does not hinder them from ardently desiring union with their Orthodox Serb brethren, and whose tolerant attitude is more than reciprocated by the Serbian Government and public opinion in Serbia. The Concordat arranged last year between Serbia and the Vatican is almost unprecedented in modern ecclesiastical history for its far-reaching and liberal concessions. It is to be hoped that this statesmanlike act will form a precedent for Russia's attitude to all her Slavonic kinsmen under foreign rule, and that when the Russian armies again enter Lemberg, such deplorable incidents as the persecution of Monsignor Szeptycki, 'the Ruthene Strossmayer', will not be repeated. That Catholics and Orthodox can live amicably side by side without any injury to the national cause is shown by the almost ideal relations which subsist between the Roumanian Uniate and Orthodox Churches in Transylvania. The enthusiasm of many million Catholic Slavs in Bohemia, Hungary, and along the Adriatic coastline, for Russia as the great Slav brother is an asset which a few fanatics must not be allowed to barter rashly away. Neither the Southern Slav nor the Bohemian nor the Polish nor the Galician questions can be solved on any basis save that of a Tregua Dei between Catholicism and Orthodoxy; and as the solution of all four problems is an essential preliminary to a durable European settlement, it lies quite as much in the interests of the Western Powers as of Russia herself, to insist upon this point of view.

In order, then, to bring the principle of nationality to its own in Europe, it will be necessary to destroy Turkey and to dismember Austria-Hungary. But to attempt to apply similar methods to Germany would be to deny, not to enforce, that same principle. The regeneration of Germany can only come from within; it can never be imposed from without. And that regeneration must be the aim of Europe, if the future peace is not to be one long nightmare of rival armaments tempered by epidemics of bankruptcy. For the moment Germany is content

with the Hohenzollern conception of kingship and of the state ; and any attempt on our part at interference with the internal arrangements of the Empire could only strengthen its hold upon the people. Underlying the whole struggle is a fundamental difference of mentality and outlook, and herein lies the true tragedy and the crowning danger of the situation. Only by exploding the doctrine of Materialism and Brute Force as the gospel of humanity can we hope to produce in Germany a reversion to that cult of idealism in which her people formerly led the world.

Attempts are being made in certain quarters to imitate the ridiculous outbursts of hate by which a German poetaster has advertised his name and which the lineal heir of the Stuarts, Prince Rupprecht of Bavaria, has stooped to endorse. The exposure of authentic 'atrocities' is a thankless but necessary task ; but those who found anti-German societies or inveigh against the inclusion of German Rhodes scholars on the roll of honour of an Oxford college, are not merely betraying a lack of perspective and wasting energy which might be well employed upon definite war objects : they are also guilty of a crude tactical error, for their abuse only tends to strengthen the reactionary party in Germany. It is a notorious fact that the brutalities committed by the German authorities in Belgium are not merely the expression of a militarism run wild, but also part of a deliberate policy which aims at stifling any tendencies on the part of the progressive elements in Germany to favour reconciliation with the Western Powers. It is equally notorious that the German military authorities were seriously alarmed at the friendly feeling displayed by the troops on many sections of the front towards their enemy in the opposing trenches, and that drastic steps were taken during the winter to stifle the growth of such a feeling. To those who are aware of the changed attitude of our own soldiers during the past six months—from chivalrous and tolerant regard for a gallant foe to burning

indignation at methods of foul play—further comment is superfluous. But though no one with a spark of humanity will be surprised at this result, it is well to realize that it was deliberately desired by the German authorities, and to decline as far as possible to play their game in other fields. The Junker party is playing for a rapprochement with the Russian reactionaries, and the German Radicals, who are to-day paying for their impotence and lack of policy in the past, find themselves reduced to silence by the tactless, though perfectly natural, exaggerations of a few fire-eaters in the West. They do not, it is true, represent a very serious force in German politics ; and indeed the history of the last seventy years in Germany has been the history of the discomfiture of popular government by the exponents of military despotism. And yet a time may be at hand when they will no longer be a negligible quantity. Defeat may secure for German democracy what victory could never bring. On the very eve of war one of the most distinguished of Prussian historians, Professor Hans Delbrück, freely admitted in a moment of candour that the German Officers' Corps would never tolerate the introduction of a parliamentary régime in Germany, save after a new Sedan in which Germany was not the victor but the vanquished.[1]

Lack of humour and ignorance of psychology lie at the root of the German official attitude. Their attempts at 'frightfulness' are based on a characteristically low reading of human nature, on the tacit assumption that material considerations must rule the world. A classic instance of this lack of comprehension was supplied at an early stage in the war, when the German press treated the special prayers prescribed by the Archbishop of Canterbury as a sign of fear and panic. These critics made the same mistake as an English king six centuries ago, who saw the Scottish army kneeling in serried ranks upon the field of Bannockburn, and joyfully hailed their approaching surrender. To William II we can surely

[1] *Regierung und Volkswille*, page 136.

repeat the words of Edward's more discerning general: 'They kneel, Sire, but not to you!'

Since the war began, many words have lost their meaning, values are utterly changed. The nation has on the whole shown a truer perception of this fact than we perhaps had any right to expect, and has incidentally proved that it is by no means so lacking in imagination as its critics were fond of asserting. It is true that a few individuals are still incapable of flinging aside the old catchwords and still cling to the theory when the practice has already been abandoned; but the number of those who hailed the collapse of the party system with unabashed delight is unquestionably far greater than the few survivors from that vanished world of 'pre-war' ideas and theories would care to admit. The classic example of the overwhelming transformation which ten months of war have wrought, is the new attitude of the nation at large towards the army. If many of those who opposed Lord Roberts's propaganda in the years that preceded the war have no hesitation in admitting their error to-day, we are at the same time entitled to protest with equal emphasis against those who wish to force unalloyed 'conscription' upon a nation of 'slackers' and against those who regard the slightest departure from the voluntary system as a crime against freedom and humanity. The one party tends to minimize what has been achieved, the other to minimize the vast task which still lies before us. Both fail to realize that such claptrap phrases as 'conscription' and 'compulsion' are wholly inadequate as the interpretation of our present need. The true traitors to our national cause are those who, for whatever motives, read into the noble phrase of 'National Service' a meaning which is utterly alien to it. National Service can have no limitation. In times of crisis every citizen must serve his country, whatever may be his age or sex or profession; and it is the duty of the State to apportion to each individual his or her own special task, whether it be military or civil. But at all costs we have the

right to demand that the idea of National Service shall never be restricted in a merely military sense, but shall remain as an irresistible claim upon the whole nation. In the words used to me only a week ago by a prominent Socialist deputy, ' every man who is not doing something for the State to-day, is fighting for the enemy ! '

Many of us, whom our work has kept at home, are frankly envious of the men at the front and feel that our best efforts in other causes are contemptible in comparison with the sacrifice they have made with so gay a heart and with scarcely a word of false sentiment or parade. We gladly face the fact that after the war it is the millions who return from active service who will be the controlling force in British politics. We know that they will introduce a steadying influence, an element of reality, which was too often lacking in the internal disputes of the nation, and that their voluntary acceptance of the hardships of war will have given them a moral force which compulsion could never have supplied. But there can be no hard-and-fast rules for supreme moments like the present. After ten months of war we are still at the beginning of our task, and we must be prepared to discard many more of our comfortable habits and traditional prejudices before the goal can be reached. To the pessimists who accuse the nation of sloth and indifference we can proudly point out that never in history has there been a voluntary acceptance of military duties on so large and so successful a scale ; while the optimists who accept this undoubted fact as a proof that further innovations are not needed, may be reminded with equal truth that the efforts put forth by this country are still relatively far less than those of our little Serbian ally, and that complete victory, whether on the field of battle or in the intellectual sphere, only comes to those who are prepared to pay the full price of sustained and concentrated effort.

The goal of this effort is the destruction of the German military machine. It is a task of enormous difficulty,

but it can be performed, and we have no choice but to perform it. But we have not got to crush the German people, because that is at once impossible and undesirable. Impossible, because a compact and highly organized nation of 75,000,000 souls can never be crushed or annihilated, and any such attempt must inevitably recoil upon its author. Undesirable, because, despite the wild and inaccurate statements of our Jingo press, the German people represents, and always will represent, one of the most valuable elements in the intellectual and moral life of Europe. Its very virtues have contributed to its exploitation by a relentless and unscrupulous machine.

Earlier in the war it was almost a commonplace that we were fighting the military caste, but not the people ; but this argument was abandoned when at last it became clear that the German nation is genuinely behind its leaders. And yet it is necessary to uphold the distinction between the governing class and the nation as a whole, for on this distinction alone does any hope for a better future rest. With the existing régime in Prussia there can be no permanent peace ; but unless some *modus vivendi* can be found with the German people, Europe will inevitably be condemned to a fresh period of agony and fratricidal strife.

The blasphemous arrogance with which the Supreme War Lord has claimed the Deity as a kind of Hohenzollern lackey is thoroughly in keeping with his attitude for many years past. At the same time those who have studied the psychology and behaviour of the military caste in Germany for the last two decades ought not to have been (and generally have not been) surprised at the manner in which its official ' Kriegsbrauch ' has been translated into practice in the present war. Neither the pseudo-Christian Caesarism of William II nor the brutal theories of the General Staff are typical of the German national character, though the crimes and errors of both are inevitably visited upon the head of the nation as a whole. Hence to treat Germany as a pariah is as

shortsighted as it is futile. Our outspoken condemnation of the infamies of Louvain and Dinant, of illegal methods of warfare on sea and land, were salutary and necessary ; and if fortune favours our arms, we shall most assuredly hold the highly-placed criminals to strict account. But Germany herself will recover her senses, as surely as France after the orgies of the Reign of Terror ; and we, who have long since ceased to regard our closest ally with the eyes of Burke or Pitt, must frame our policy to meet the requirements of the future as well as of the present. While firmly resolving never again to be caught napping by an unscrupulous diplomacy, and insisting on practical steps to render fresh aggression impossible, we must at the same time avoid any action such as might render more difficult Germany's recovery from the madness which has overpowered her. I have no desire to echo the futile cry of a handful of sentimentalists that 'Germany must not be humiliated'. Defeat is always humiliating, even after a fair fight! and those who do not desire Germany's complete defeat are traitors to the cause of Britain and of civilization. We must impose our terms, if we can, but this can be done without outraging the soul of a great nation. In the words of M. Paul Sabatier—most assuredly one of the spiritual guides of the new Europe—'Victory on the battlefield will not be complete and definite unless we crown it, not by acts of revenge against the countless misdeeds of the Germans, but by a sort of missionary effort. Civilization would be lost, if in order to take vengeance on the Germans, we were to adopt the sentiments of national pride and ferocious hatred which have created German militarism and made of Prussia a spiritual danger'. The spirit which aims at dismembering the greatest national State in Europe must be sternly discouraged, not merely because it reveals an incapacity to distinguish between the possible and the impossible, but above all because any such attempt would be a monstrous negation of the very principles of which we have made so loud a profession.

The dominant factor, then, upon which not merely Anglo-German relations but the whole future of civilization depends, is simply this : What will the 75,000,000 of Germans think after the war ? What will be their attitude to the world around them ? Can they be brought to believe, and above all to impose the belief upon their rulers, that there is a higher appeal than to Brute Force ? Or are they so sunk in materialism, so tamed by long years of over-discipline, as to be incapable of realizing the triumphant power of an idea ? There was a time when no people on earth understood this so well as the German : time alone can show whether they will revert to the idealism of a great past, or whether the system of blood and iron which now holds them as in a vice, will prove too strong for the awakening spirit of self-criticism. This is the great riddle of the future, to which no man can pretend to supply a trustworthy answer. It will be the duty of the statesmen of the Entente to avoid so far as possible a policy which would either silence the advocates of conciliation or drive them into the arms of the reactionaries.

Some well-meaning people to whom the domain of Foreign Policy remains a sealed book despite all their efforts to map it out, would have us believe that the evacuation of Belgium and Northern France by the Germans would provide a tolerable basis for peace negotiations. *Sancta Simplicitas* ! we may well exclaim. On the one hand the Prussian Government will never consent to such terms until its financial (if not its military) situation is desperate, though it is already using such informal proposals as a convenient manœuvre to impress neutral countries with its moderation. But on the other hand—and this is infinitely more important—public opinion must grasp the fact that our aim in this war is not merely the restoration of unhappy Belgium to her former position. That is one of our many aims, and it was one of the determining facts in our action last August. But it is only a small detail in the great task that awaits

us—and I use the phrase advisedly without for one moment minimizing all that Belgium means for Europe and for us. Our task is nothing less than the regeneration of Europe, the vindication of the twin principles of Nationality and Democracy, the emancipation of subject races from alien rule. Restore Belgium, reunite Alsace-Lorraine to France, but ignore the agony of Poland, the irresistible movement for Southern Slav Unity, the new and hopeful dream of an Italian Italy, the growing resolve of Bohemia, the aspirations of the Roumanians, Slovaks, and Ruthenes, the impossible nature of Turkish rule, the vital need for Balkan co-operation, the overwhelming claims of Russia to an access to the Mediterranean,—and in so doing you are giving your vote for the old Europe of reaction and materialism, and selling your birthright in the new and transfigured Europe of our dreams. Half-measures are for times of peace ; to-day we must build on broad foundations, not waste our time upon the scaffolding of a house which has been condemned as unsafe. But where is the master-builder ? That is our greatest need to-day. The nation has already shown during this war that it can respond to a clear call ; and in the great problem of munitions at least one man has shown himself ready to lead us. But in Foreign Policy the same lead is urgently needed—no longer the silence of pessimism or caution which has weighed upon our spirits during the past six months, but the gallant and incisive phrases with which our statesmen roused our enthusiasm in the early stages of the war. Britain must prove true to her mission as the soul of the Entente—not as the exponent of some new-fangled 'English Culture', but as the champion of those wider principles of mutual tolerance without which neither a healthy national life nor healthy international relations are possible.

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